

## BLOOMFIELD CITIZEN.

## THE SCHOOL QUESTION.

Rev. J. M. Nardiello Continues his Argument and Replies Briefly to "E. A. S."

To the *Bloomfield Citizen*:

The School Law of some States provides, among other things, that "It shall be the duty of all teachers to endeavor to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality." Now, what is morality, and how is a teacher to know what it is that he or she is required to teach, in order to comply with this requirement of the statute? Let us one entertain the notion that morality can be maintained without religion. But if morality cannot be maintained without religion, then how is it possible for the teacher to inculcate the principles of morality without inculcating the principles of religion? But the principles of religion are understood by the Jews differently from what they are by the Christians, by the Catholics differently from Presbyterians, by the Presbyterians differently from the Unitarians, etc. Then how is it possible for the State to require the teaching of morals in the Public Schools without requiring as the basis of such teaching the inculcation of religious principles? Now, are the teachers to be the instructors of the principles of religion? To whom did Christ our Lord give the power to teach but to the church, when he said to his apostles: "Go and teach all nations." Is it not clear, then, that the State has no right to demand from the teachers to endeavor to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality? What must your readers think now of the cry of those cranks who say that your schools are non-sectarian, that no religion of any kind is taught there, and therefore adapted to all kinds of children? It is very strange that even intelligent people will sometimes utter this cry, whilst they see and know that children cannot be good moral men when they grow up, without having those principles of religion inculcated in them, and that teachers have no right to inculcate them.

Some may say, if the children were taught to discern evil from good, and the teachers in the schools were to appeal to their better feelings, children would behave themselves well, and sentiments of self-respect, of honesty, of morality and uprightness were constantly presented to their minds, they would make a lasting impression and when they grow up, these lessons learned in their early life, would rule their conduct towards God, towards themselves, towards their neighbor, and towards society. To this I answer with the words of Prof. Balliett. At the session of the American Institute of Instruction, Prof. T. B. Balliett, Superintendent of Schools of Reading, Pa., delivered an address upon "The Feelings of their culture." He said: "We make the mistake in our dealing with the children, of assuming that their emotional nature is fully developed, that they have all the emotions the adult has. The emotions, like all faculties, develop by exercise. We cannot develop a feeling by talking to the child about it. In like manner a strong feeling is weakened by disuse. The emotional element in conscience develops gradually, and it is a great mistake to assume that an appeal merely to the sense of right in case of a child, is sufficient to secure right conduct. A child's conscience will no more keep him out of moral harm when exposed to temptation, than his judgment will protect him against physical injury when exposed to danger. We should not expose a child to temptation which his undeveloped moral nature is not sufficiently strong to resist. The self-deporting system of our schools violate this principle. It is one of the most effective means of training children into dishonesty. It is some such training as this, that educates our defaulting bank cashiers, who, at the same time that they superintend Sunday schools, rob banks and when detected astonish their friends by their supposed sudden fall." It is the testimony of such school officials as Prof. Balliett, who have had long and practical experience in schools, that has great weight and value with a large class of people, who often times mistrust religious teachers and rely entirely on the skill of school teachers to appeal to the better feelings of their children, and to their sense of right in order to secure, when they grow up into manhood, right conduct.

Who pays the school tax? The Catholic parent is compelled to pay his money to support schools to which he cannot in conscience send his children, and if he but opens his mouth to complain, a volley of angry words and abuse deafen him, and he gets more knocks than dimes he pays. His right to a conscience is admitted when his conscience conforms to the dictates of others. He claims to educate his child in schools in harmony with his religious convictions, but no one gives him heed. Religious conventions, ministers of different denominations, professors, school superintendents, teachers, laymen, and newspapers can find fault with the present system of schools, and no one raises his voice to denounce them as the enemies of this great American institution. As soon as the Catholic parent complains for supporting his own school, and the school where his rich neighbors' sons are educated, he is told that he must take common schools as they are, and he has no right whatever to complain. This is moderate language, rougher and much less civil is what he hears. Justice and equity are ignored. Instead of justice the Catholic receives insults. The poor Catholic hears, in the midst of loud talk about rights of man and rights of conscience, and when he asserts these rights, he is told that the freedom offered is somebody else's freedom. In downright derision he is asked what taxes he pays! Is he not a poor laborer, without a home he can call his own, a mere

tenant? Are not the taxes paid by the rich landlord? Simple and guiltless the poor Catholic may be, but his memory reminds him that when last the landlord called he was told, as taxes and assessments had been so much increased, a trifle would have to be added to the rent. The same unpleasant remark met him in the grocery store, the meat shop, the shoe store, and wherever he went to buy the simplest necessities of life. Anxious to learn how it was that the taxes had been raised, he talked with his neighbors, and after many inquiries discovered that new and costly schoolhouses had been built, salaries of officials had been added to, and the sum of incidental growth out of all proportion. He then learnt why his rent was raised, and why he paid more for necessities of life. He was not so dull that he could not see that he was paying for the increase of taxes. The landlord, the manufacturer, the seller pays the tax bill, but the consumer furnishes a large part of the money with which the taxes are paid.

From what has been said your readers will see that the present system of State Schools perpetrates many injustices and molds false principles. Ist, it is an infringement of parental rights and duties, inasmuch as it compels poor people, who educate their own children for conscience sake, to help to educate their richer neighbors' children. 2d, it cruelly oppresses poor people by giving to their richer neighbors' sons not simply an elementary education, but an education sufficient to earn their living by means of a learned profession. To put both on an equal footing, poor children should be taught a trade at the expense of the State. 3d, it establishes a monopoly best left to individual enterprise and the immediate control of parents. 4th, the principles on which it is justified, will justify with greater force the claim of the communist to labor and bread.

But some of your readers may ask me what remedy could I offer to the present system of Common Schools? My object in writing is not to propose plans and systems, but to argue that the present one is radically wrong for rejecting religious education, and needs amendment. I leave that to wiser heads to propose plans and systems. Still in my humble opinion I would suggest, 1st, the non interference of the State in religious matters in church or in school. 2d, the establishment of denominational schools where and when required, under the supervision of the State. 3d, compulsory education through parents' schools, under parents' control, and at their cost. 4th, free trade in education.

I hope I have given no offence to anyone, and trusting that my letters on this very important subject have produced their effects by opening parents' eyes to the danger in which their children are placed, by being brought up in infidelity.

P. S. I need not write a formal reply to the criticism of E. A. S. for various reasons. 1st, I do not wish to take advantage of his weak position. 2d, he was too hasty to write his reply to my first letter, without giving me time to state my case. 3d, he has gone out of the subject. If I were writing against Protestantism, then his remarks might have been in a certain way justified. 4th, neither he or any one else could find fault or deny the principles laid down in my first letter. 5th, he has made false and vague assertions. 6th, he has contradicted himself many times. It is not true that Parochial Schools have stood "by the side of Common Schools." Common Schools have existed for generations, whilst the Parochial Schools are in their infancy, and if E. A. S. is satisfied to adopt "the only true method of testing a system" by its result, in Bible language, its "fruits," then what he calls "the most reckless, vicious, ignorant, and dangerous men that he has ever met are native born children of foreign Catholic parentage," are the "fruits" of the Common Schools, for very few Parochial Schools were in existence in those times, and if E. A. S. were surrounded by the same circumstances in which those poor people are living, instead of living in a spacious and airy house, with all kinds of comforts, and doing very little laborious work, he would be more wicked, more vicious and more dangerous than they are. But does E. A. S. really call vicious and dangerous those poor unfortunate fellows who will talk loud, drink a little too much, and use some bad language? I consider more vicious and more dangerous "the fruits" of Common Schools, those educated rascals, who, with a deliberate will and with full consent of the mind, defraud poor people, rob banks, corrupt public trust, and dishonor humanity by their immorality.

Evidently E. A. S. has studied his history, and I hope he will continue to do so, not for the sake of finding fault, but to learn and appreciate. And the "church that for ages made the laws, to a large extent governed the world, and in great part well"; that church that preserved "pure religion and the Bible"; "the magnificent cathedrals, and wonderful treasures of art and music which she has created, will illumine the world forever." I trust will illumine E. A. S. a little more, that one day he may become one of the fold of this illustrious church.

J. M. NARDIELLO.

A THOUGHTFUL GIRL.—Mistress—Mary, you may take Fido out for an airing. Poor fellow, he's been begging to go all day." Nurse Girl—"It's uncommon hot. Maybe the sun would be too much for him." Mistress—You are a very thoughtful girl, Mary. Take the baby out now. You can take Fido when it gets cooler."

There is a hotel in Sugar Hill in the White Mountains where the night watch and clerk are both divinity students, and the scrub girl an ex-school teacher who speaks French and Latin

## SHALL AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS BE PRESERVED?

AN IRISH-AMERICAN VIEW OF THE SCHOOL QUESTION.

To the Editor:

The two articles that have been published in THE CITIZEN, discussing the School Question from the Catholic standpoint, have been devoted to showing that knowledge is a kind of monopoly, to be hedged about as the privilege of an elect few; and that a free and general diffusion of it tends to infidelity and lawlessness. Such is the argument, and to support it eminent Americans, who seem to adopt that view, and statistics as well. He then learnt why his rent was raised, and why he paid more for necessities of life. He was not so dull that he could not see that he was paying for the increase of taxes. The landlord, the manufacturer, the seller pays the tax bill, but the consumer furnishes a large part of the money with which the taxes are paid.

Notwithstanding the denunciation of the Public Schools by some of the clergy, intelligent Catholic laymen (and they are by no means few) are freely expressing their opinion to the contrary. The Standard contains frequent letters from Catholics who resent any interference of the "ecclesiastical machine" in this and similar secular matters. Major W. J. Gleason of Cleveland, O., prominent in the Irish National League, voices the opinion of Irish-Americans generally when he says: "I am heartily in sympathy with Dr. McGlynn's position in regard to Public Schools. I never could see the sense of sending children long distances to Parochial Schools—second-rate schools at that, when first-class, well-equipped Public Schools were at hand for all who would attend."

Is there an intelligent Catholic in Bloomfield who will say the money devoted to separate education in the past nine years would not have been better applied to fixing up or paying for little homes of their own?

S. M. H.

needless expense. As Dr. McGlynn (than whom no truer Catholic or better friend of his people breathes today) said years ago in regard to Parochial Schools, they are "a kind of spiritual luxury," the cost of which he never would impose upon the people of St. Stephen's parish. And since he has been "clashed out of his pulpit," as he expresses it, for devotion to the best interests of his people, spiritual and material, he does not hesitate to say that Parochial Schools are "shams."

Unless we are ready to concede that the Public School is an immoral institution, promoting irreligion and all that is bad, we are forced to the alternative that through unwise and mistaken zeal, an injustice has been done, and is being done Catholics in obliging them to segregate themselves from other classes of citizens and support a separate school.

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The American Institute of Christian Philosophy.

From The Scientific American.

This society, which has just held its sixth anniversary and its tenth summer school of science and philosophy, should be better understood and appreciated by the public. The Institute was originated by a number of prominent American scientists at the suggestion of the Earl of Shaftesbury. It is designed to accomplish in this country results analogous to those achieved abroad by the Victoria Institute of Great Britain. Its president, from the first, has been Rev. Charles F. Deems, D. D., the accomplished pastor of the Church of the Strangers, in New York City. Among its vice-presidents may be named Bishop Bedell, ex-president Noah Porter, of Yale University, Hon. T. F. Bayard, Rev. Joseph Calk, of Boston, Professor Alexander Winchell, of Ann Arbor, and other men of mark. The secretary is the noted botanist, Professor C. M. Davis, of Bloomfield, N. J., and the treasurer is William Harman Brown of New York City. The gift of five dollars makes the donor a member for life; while annual members pay but five dollars a year for the privileges of the Institute, namely, the use of the library, tickets to the lectures given under its auspices, and copies of all official publications. The entire membership at present is exactly 484, including members from the United States and Canada, representing all of the various branches of scientific investigation, all of the learned professions, and every phase of religious belief.

Monthly meetings of the Institute are held in this city. The annual meetings and the summer schools of science and philosophy are usually held at some place of summer resort. This year the place of meeting was at Key East, near Ocean Grove, N. J. An invitation has been received to meet next year at Round Lake, N. Y. The interest taken by those who attend these meetings is deep and earnest, although there is not as large an attendance as might be inferred from the long list of members.

The following papers were read and discussed during the summer session of 1887, from August 17 to 25: "Certain Aspects of Modern Skepticism," by Lyman Abbott, of New York; "History, a Demonstration under the Moral Law," by James F. Riggs, of Bergen Point, N. J.; "Paul's Psychology," by Isaac F. Hopkins, president of Emory College, Oxford, Ga.; "Physical Theories of the Mind," by J. T. Bixbee, of Yonkers, N. Y.; "Bishop Berkeley's Philosophy," by C. F. Deems, of New York; "Subterranean Scenery," by H. C. Howey, of Bridgeport, Conn.; "History and Philosophy of Sunday Legislation," by A. H. Lewis, of Philadephia, N. J.; "Some Aspects of Theistic Logic," by Professor A. T. Ormond, of Princeton, N. J.; "Christian Evolutionism and its Influence on Religious Thought," by Professor D. S. Martin, of New York; and the closing address by Thomas Hill, ex-president of Harvard University, was on "The Absolute, a Person."

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